CLAIMS

We claim:

1.   A system for managing a plurality of assets of a plurality of distributed enterprises and allowing a user to access asset information, the system comprising:

5   a central processor; and

a database for storing asset information for the plurality of assets of the plurality of enterprises, the database in communication with the central processor;

wherein the central processor tracks information relevant to managing each of the plurality of assets.

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2.   The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor includes a website hosted by at least one computer in communication with a computer network through a communication link.

3.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a client processor in communication with the 15 central processor through the communication link.

4.   The system of claim 1, wherein the database stores asset information in the form of pages which in turn contain links to other pages.

20 5.   The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor automatically generates an E-mail message to a service provider in response to a service request by the user.

6.   The system of claim 2, wherein the client processor inputs, queries, and downloads asset information from the central processor through a web browser.

7.   The system of claim 6, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for

utilizing a user profile, including securable attributes, to limit access to particular asset

information.

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8.   The user of claim 7, wherein the user profile specifies sites at which the user may access

asset information.

9.   The system of claim 7, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for

10 organizing asset information in accordance with the user's request.

10.   The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for

generating a GIS map locating one of the plurality of enterprise assets.

15 11.   The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for

determining an appropriate service provider for a particular asset and alerting the service

provider of a service request.

12.   The system of claim 11, further comprising an asset interface in communication with the

20 client processor.

13.   The system of claim 12, wherein the central processor is programmed with code for

establishing a communication link with the asset interface through the client processor.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the asset interface communicates with the client processor through a wireless communication modality.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor is programmed with code to calculate a total cost of ownership for a particular asset or group of assets.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the database includes at least one database server in communication with a computer network.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the user is an agent of the enterprise.

18. The system of claim 1, wherein the user is a service provider.

19. The system of claim 1, wherein the user is an equipment manufacturer.

20. A system for managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise, the system comprising:

>   a website hosted by at least one computer in communication with a computer network;
>
>   and
>
>   a client processor, including a web browser, in communication with the website through the computer network;
>
>   wherein the at least one computer tracks information relevant to determining a total cost of ownership for each asset.

21. The system of claim 20, and further comprising at least one database server in communication with the website, the database server having asset information stored therein in the form of pages, with some pages including links to other pages of information.

5 22. The system of claim 21, and further comprising a client processor in communication with the central processor and an asset interface in communication with the client processor.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the website is programmed with code for communicating with the asset interface through the client processor.

10 24. The system of claim 23, wherein the asset interface includes a means for taking operative control of a particular asset.

25. The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for selectively

15 filtering asset information based on user specified criteria.

26. The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for calculating a total cost of ownership.

20 27. The system of claim 20, wherein the website is programmed with code for utilizing a user profile, including securable attributes, to limit access to particular applications and to particular asset information.

28.   The system of claim 20 wherein the website includes pictorial displays of each individual asset.

29.   The system of claim 20, wherein the client processor is a kiosk located at an enterprise site.

30.   A method of managing enterprise assets of a highly distributed enterprise, the method comprising:

creating an asset identifier corresponding to each of the plurality of assets for each individual asset;

specifying factors to be monitored for each asset identifier;

storing asset information pertaining to a factor for each asset identifier in a database;

receiving user specified requests for asset information from a client processor at a remote site; and

transmitting the requested asset information to the client processor.

31.   The method of claim 30, and further comprising the additional step of providing a web site in communication with a computer network for communicating with a client processor.

32.   The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of creating a GIS map based on the user specified request.

33.   The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of filtering asset information based on the user specified request.

34.   The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of calculating a total cost of ownership for an asset or a group of assets based on the user specified request.

35.   The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of inputting asset information from a client processor at a remote site.

36.   The method of claim 31 wherein asset information is stored in the form of pages containing links to other pages.

37.   The method of claim 31, and further comprising the additional step of filtering asset information transmitted to a particular user based on predetermined levels of access.

38.   A method of generating service requests in a highly distributed enterprise to a plurality of service providers from a plurality of distributed asset sites, the method comprising:

    providing a website hosted by at least one server computer in communication with a computer network, the website including a database containing asset information and service provider information;

    receiving a service request at the website for an asset;

    automatically selecting an appropriate service provider based on the asset to be serviced; and

generating an electronic message to the appropriate service provider requesting service.

39.   The method of claim 38, and further comprising the additional steps of creating a log listing service requests, and generating additional electronic messages to the service provider if no response has been forthcoming.

40.   The method of claim 38, wherein the electronic message is an E-mail.

41.   The method of claim 40, and further comprising the additional step of attaching asset information onto the E-mail.

42.   The method of claim 41, and further comprising the additional step of attaching a link to a web page onto the E-mail.

43.   The method of claim 38, and further comprising the additional step of receiving a service report at the website from a service provider.

44.   The method of claim 43, and further comprising the additional step of storing asset information in the service report under an appropriate factor.

45.   The method of claim 38, wherein the service request is generated automatically by an asset interface through a client computer in communication with a computer network.

46.   A menu structure for a software application comprising:

a first horizontally-disposed section, the first section including a plurality of main
navigational categories; and

a second horizontally-disposed section, the second section displaying an indication of

5   subcategories for a selected main navigational category.

47.   The menu structure of claim 46, wherein selection of a subcategory on the second
horizontally-disposed section will cause the display of a second set of subcategories on the
second section.

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48.   The menu structure of claim 47, wherein the second section further includes a menu
indication in visual association with each subcategory that is a menu subcategory.